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## CHINESE FICTION

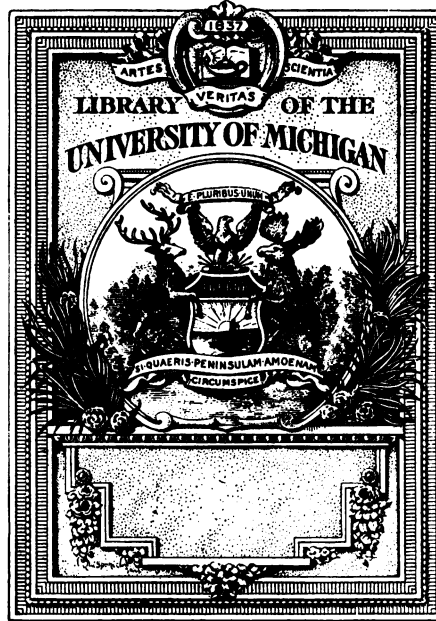
BY THE

REV. GEORGE T. CANDLIN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ORIGINAL CHINESE WORKS

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## CHINESE FICTION.

BY GEORGE T. CANDLIN.

ONE of the most salient characteristics of modern life is its tendency to a cosmopolitan comprehensiveness. In the distribution and exchange, whether of the material goods of commerce, or of the richer and rarer treasures of the mind, we seem determined to carry the circulation round the whole habitable globe, and down through every layer of society to its lowest strata. From lucifer matches and cheap oleographs up to the highest products of art, of science, and of literature, there is an ever-increasing approach to universality, so that we do not know in what remote region of the earth we may pick up a translation of Shakespeare's plays, or which newly enlightened band of savages may be disporting themselves with Edison's phonograph. Our readiness to lend hardly surpasses our willingness to borrow, and the cold mountains of Norway furnish our theatres with the dramas of Ibsen, while Buffalo Bill is imported from the Wild West to provide new circus attractions for the British public.

So deeply has the modern mind been imbued with the cosmopolitan spirit, especially in the highest province of mental activity, that while national schools of art and science are formed, their attainments immediately become the common property of all, a glad communism in which there is rivalry but not detraction, patriotism expresses itself as the desire to have our own achievements stand well in the general record, and a knowledge of the distinctive features of each is thought necessary to a liberal education.

The wide field of fiction has been subject at least as much as any other department to this widening influence. While our own best novels have been translated into various languages no effort

cribed to a Taoist priest, is the Pilgrim's Progress of Buddhism, a rich repertory of religious myths.

These instances sufficiently indicate the close connexion between popular religion and popular fiction. But what it is important for our readers to understand is that the mere study of a religion in its purified form affords no sufficient key to its influence on the national mind either for good or for evil. We cannot understand the concrete value of any religion until we take it as a whole "with all its imperfections on its head." Superstitions themselves thus become an important object of study. How could we understand the religion of the Greeks if we left out Greek mythology—if we knew nothing of Jupiter, of Venus, of Mercury, of Bacchus, the Gorgons, the Fates, or the nobly suffering rebel Prometheus? There is in like manner, closely associated with Chinese religious belief, a whole world of mythical lore. If we are quite ignorant of this we cannot understand the national mind or its mysterious workings. Now such literature as we propose to examine is the one channel open to us for the study of these complex supernatural and superstitious beliefs. If our object is to know simply what is true in Chinese religions we may safely neglect it, but then we cannot understand the Chinaman as he actually is. If we would understand how his religion has moulded his mind, through what obstructions and distortions the purer rays of truth have worked, we shall find in the historical and mythical novels of China the chief material of our study.

But this is not all, nor the chief part, of what is to be said. It is at least as interesting and much more instructive to observe the light which fiction throws upon the deep moral principles and spiritual intuitions which religions share in common, however diversified in external appearance and however varied their concrete value as agencies for the regulation of life, and which in reality give them their hold upon the reason and conscience of mankind. Fiction testifies not less to the common truths than to the diversified errors embodied in religious systems, and even to what we may call truth held in falsehood, as it shows us what are essentially the same spiritual instincts wearing such strange guises, that, though intrinsically identical, they appear strange and even antagonistic to each other, like members of the same family who, being dressed most diversely, have come to regard dress so exclusively as to forget their common ties of blood and feature and to treat each other as strangers and even enemies. No religion is wholly true and no religion wholly false. The falsest has more truth than it is

aware of, and the truest more falsehood than it will acknowledge. Even of the pure Gospel as preached by apostolic lips it had to be said "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." There is place here for the application of Emerson's apothegm, "the highest cannot be spoken of in words." Chinese devotees, whether Buddhist or Taoist, often refer to the beautiful legend of a *wu tzü ching* (a wordless classic), the idea being that of teaching so pure and spiritual that words must inevitably warp its truth and stain its purity. There is a common meeting ground of the creeds, whether Christian or heathen, which the fiery polemics of every camp alike ignore, and because they ignore it their word-contests are too often fruitless and indecisive, depending hardly at all on the intrinsic merits of the cause, almost entirely upon the intellectual strength of the champion, powerless to win over opponents, strong only to confirm each side in its own darling opinions. Why wonder that we do not reach pure truth and harmonise belief? Our discussions are too militant, too full of the fighting instinct which the battle-skirted march of the race through all past ages has imbued us with. Is it a question of civil or criminal justice? We have a fight about it, and plaintiff and defendant *contend* in an arena called a law-court. Is it a question of the wise government of a country? We have a fight about it, and Whig and Tory, Republican and Democrat *contend* in an arena called a parliament. Is it a question of religious teaching? We have a fight about it, and the champions of rival creeds *contend* in an arena of polemical discussion where confusion is greatest and feeling bitterest of all.

But it is always strife, not comprehension, victory, not edification, which is aimed at. All progress made hitherto has been chiefly that the ring is better kept and the rules a little fairer than they used to be. Only men of rare openness, fearless candor, and calm, patient love, see adequately the common ground which it is the interest of the champions to ignore, yet which has given to their creed its credibility and is the secret source of its strength. Even they are rather inwardly conscious of it than capable of giving it adequate expression. They cannot state it in any way that will in the least satisfy either the combatants or their several crowds of admirers. But what thoughtful student has not at some time had sight of the truth that the religions are all aiming dubiously and with but misty glimpses at a mark none of them adequately attain, that the heart of the matter, could they but think so, is one. All lead toward the mystery which none of them solve. All are conscious, however objectionable the manner in which they

express it, of the Divine Power that rules our lives, of hopes beyond the grave, of a life higher than the sordid struggle for wealth or place, all pronounce the sacred word duty and have risen to the exalting conception of righteousness. They differ? Yes! as much as you please; we will not minimise their discrepancies, by virtue of which, says the infidel, they are mutually destructive. His conclusion is wrong simply because in these high things they *agree* and their many differences are a proof of the essential truth of what they agree in. So fierce has been the strife between them they would have differed in everything if they could have done, as indeed in most cases they have *persuaded themselves* they do.

Now nowhere is this truth more clearly illustrated than in those delineations of life and character which presented naturally, which unconsciously let slip, as it were, in their dramatic course, the unauthorised and unformulated religious convictions and impulses of mankind. Fiction shows us, and hardly any more so than that of China, that every creed has nourished men of earnest and true piety, reverencing heaven, loving men, living pure lives and doing noble deeds. At the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Buddhists and Brahmans alike spoke of God in much the same way as the Christian divines who were present. This was probably puzzling to many not only because those systems are only thought of by great numbers as mere idolatries, but because with more reason the most accomplished scholars have reduced the first to Atheism and the second to Pantheism. Perhaps we are right in saying that *theoretically* they are such, yet practice triumphs over theory, and the speakers were not conscious hypocrites. They were instinctively aware that what we reverence as God is in substance what they reverence. Fiction, saturated by the ideas of these schools, exhibits the same peculiarities.

Or to deal with religious conceptions of a more dubious character, Christianity has been peculiarly stamped by the spirit of chivalry, to which, perhaps, is due the elevation of woman of which it claims the merit. In Roman Catholicism this tendency has reached exaggerated expression in the worship of the Virgin. We see how natural this is when we consider that Buddhism has its Kuan Yin and Taoism its T'ien Hou Mang, both female impersonations of divinity, and in the pages of many a novelist we find these goddesses appealed to from precisely the same motives and for much the same objects as Mary would be in English novels depicting life and manners amongst Roman Catholics. We may be sure that while in each case the form which this natural feeling

has taken is erroneous and *super*-stitious, there is some truth behind craving in vain for right expression.

Again, nothing is more noticeable on a comparison of religions than that, while all have their sacred books, a formal doctrine of inspiration is peculiar to the Bible and the Koran. Yet no fact is worthy of more attention than that which fiction abundantly illustrates that in practice all treat their classics precisely as if they were inspired, reverencing them beyond all limits, so that paper and ink and the very errors in typography become sacred, quoting them as of final authority in controversy and regarding them as the summary of all truth. If you ask a Confucianist, "Are the Four Books inspired?" he will first be bewildered by the question, having never thought of them in that light. Your meaning having been more fully explained to him, he will probably say, "No." But in the result he will treat them with the same pious reverence and surrender with which you treat your Bible, if not even with more. For him they are practically inspired. It is a beautiful and true instinct of our humanity which cannot be eradicated by logic to hold in pious love the text-book of our religious teaching whatever it may be and the light literature which is the very opposite of the sacred books was the fullest testimony to the constancy of the sentiment.

Instances might be multiplied, but we have adduced enough to show how much light fictitious literature can throw upon the religious beliefs of those among whom it has sprung up; the weight of its testimony supporting the conclusion that just as our common humanity has shown strange diversity in different ages, with differing climes, under differing physical and social conditions; in laws, in customs, in dress, in external manners and ceremonies; yet is wondrously one at heart; so the strange and often wild and grotesque expression of those verities of the soul which we name religion hinders not that the spring and secret of their power has been alike, that it has been, though with varying dimness or clearness of insight, as the generations have kept their watch through the night of history, a true hope and vision of eternal things.

The tone in which the novel literature of China has been spoken of by Western scholars has for different reasons been almost invariably a tone of disparagement. Men who have taken pains to read but a strictly limited quantity, have not hesitated to pronounce it crude, puerile, and grossly impure. Like Browning's poems, it has been taken in quite homeopathic doses administered

at long intervals, yet has been pronounced nauseous as the drugs of the allopath. Those wonderful beings, a sort of Arhats or Mahatmas in literature, whose sacred function it is to reveal to common mortals the profound esoteric mysteries of Eastern bibliography, we mean the sinologues, intent as they are on the ancient and the heavy, would no doubt feel insulted if asked to take interest in anything so trifling as a mere novel. This whole field they pass by with the sublime unconsciousness of superior beings to whom such paltry matters are "trifles light as air." Rarely indeed has a voice been heard in approval. The one solitary testimony of any warmth which we have been able to find after much hunting is this of Remusat, which we take from the *Middle Kingdom*. In the midst of much respecting the defects and shortcomings of Chinese novels, he compares them (as a body, we suppose) to Richardson, and says: "The authors render their characters interesting and natural by reiterated strokes of the pencil which finally produce a high degree of illusion. The interest in their pages arose precisely in proportion to the stage of my progress; and in approaching to the termination I found myself about to part with some agreeable people, just as I had duly learned to relish their society." We give this with misgiving. It reads to us very like the "faint praise that damns." In fact China yet lacks that Western mind which has enough sympathy with this very large department of her literature to become in any degree its interpreter to the novel-loving Occident. Even Mr. Giles, the translator of the *Liao-Tsia*, the author of *Gems of Chinese Literature*, with his open sense and warm appreciation of all things Celestial, even Mr. Giles (we really beg his pardon if we take his name in vain) that Goliath champion of Chinese literature against the world, that Philistic blasphemer of the Western Israel, clerical and lay, has held in such light esteem this field of fiction, as in a book, professedly illustrating the *belles lettres* of China, to write of the Yuan the Mongol dynasty, which produced its great masterpieces, the *San Kuo Tzu*, the *Shui Hu*, the *Shih Hsiang*, the *Pi Pa Chi*, and the *Hsi Yu*, that "the imaginative power became visibly weaker, to decline later on to a still lower level of rule-and-line mediocrity." Yet we hope to show our readers that the Chinese have an enormous quantity (it is so hopelessly scattered and buried that we can hardly call it a collection) of prose imaginative writing, the great bulk of it by no means despicable, and some portions of it of a very high order of merit, which does not yield in interest or in literary finish, though perhaps it does in imaginative force, to the

best Western fiction; and which furnishes a mirror of Chinese life, household customs, ideals of character and superstitious folklore to be found nowhere else.

The feature to which we will first call attention is the extent of the field to be gone over by an investigator of Chinese fiction.

This is a matter on which it is too possible to be under a great delusion. China is a country in which there is nothing ready to your hand. Her literary productions are in a hopeless state of confusion, and no one knows what treasures of imagination may be buried under mountains of comparative rubbish. You cannot look at the end of a book and see advertisements of hundreds of others of its class. You cannot send for publishers' lists and pick them out at your ease. You cannot take up a history of literature and find them chronologically arranged. China has had great critics, but none who have dealt comprehensively with her literature. The Taine of the "Flowery Kingdom" has not yet appeared. An inquiry into the works of fiction she possesses is beset by difficulties which can only be likened to the fabulous search of "Hsuen Tsang" for the Buddhist canons. You must go on faith that they exist, that they are precious, and that they may be had by undaunted seeking: but it is a long way to fetch them, you have the vaguest possible idea where to look, and there are untold difficulties to be surmounted in the quest.

Your first impression is that you are in for a nice, neat, compact little thing, though you have a very ugly feeling of being in most disreputable company. The attitude of the ordinary Confucian teacher toward the fictitious writings of his ancestors is a charming study in masculine prudery. It is really a high-class article in the way of sentiment. It is such a lovely mixture of intellectual superiority, moral reprobation, fastidious delicacy, and hypocritical purity, as nearly withers you up. You are thoroughly ashamed of having supposed it possible that he ever was so weak as to betray the faintest interest in such low, trivial things. He is nearly as much scandalised as though you should make bold to ask him does he love his wife. Nothing can equal it except the avidity with which he will read novels on the sly. If you muster courage to go through this first stage and to be persevering in your inquiries, you will find that this highly proper individual knows more about novels than is consistent with his virtuous professions. He can if he likes give you a very fair outline of the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, and the names of its noted characters, though they amount to some seven hundred. He can detail no small num-



ber of the yarns in the *History of the Contending States*, give you the plot of the *Western Rooms*, incidents from the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, tales from the *Diversions of a Studio*, and the myths of the fabulous *Western Expedition*, and he at least knows the name of the *Tale of the Guitar*. You draw these things from him reluctantly, he evidently believing that it is much to his discredit to know anything about them. But there he comes to a sudden stop. You ask if these comprise the whole or the main works of fiction. "By no means," and he perhaps vaguely remembers the names of five or six others, some of which you must on no account read. You try another teacher, and another, and still another with the same result. But just as you are about to conclude that these are all that are worth notice, and that you have a manageable quantity to deal with, a sentence in the preface of a book or a stray observation sets you on a new track, you find that there are more and yet more books that no one you have met with has ever read, that no literary guide ever mentions, the names of which most people are ignorant of; and by dint of following a hint here and pursuing a clue there, you realise that you are in a trackless wilderness of unknown extent and of unexplored growth. There is no one publishing centre in China that corresponds to London: its Paternoster Row is distributed loosely through the Empire, but a very forest of timber must be tumbling about in lumber-rooms in the shape of wood blocks on which novels are stereotyped. So that we must dismiss from our minds the idea that Chinese fiction is a very limited quantity. There is any amount if you can get at it, but, bless us, it is like rummaging in an old second-hand book shop. The owner turns you in, bidding you pick out what you like, you select this and that from the dusty, piled-up heaps, but finally leave in disgust, unable to cope with the confusion, yet covetously longing to know all that's there. The quantity in existence may be inferred from a single fact. Chinese fiction, like Roman Catholic theology, has an *Index Expurgatorius*. In Wylie's *Notes on Chinese Literature* the list of prohibited novels published by this censorate contains the names of one hundred and thirty-seven different works. If such be the mere parings, the *excrementitia* of their novel literature, what must be the bulk of the whole body? A great deal of it is worthless enough, imitations are numerous, every really clever and popular novel has been plagiarised to satiety, but how much there is that has real merit it is impossible to say. A certain number of these books are known as "works of genius." We have got as far as ten of these in our researches, which we think is

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KUAN YÜN CH'ANG, THE MARS OF CHINA. See p. 3.  
(From an illustrated edition of *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)

all, but are by no means certain. We give a list of fourteen of the most famous of Chinese novels, the names of which for convenience we have put into English, as follows :

1. History of the Three Kingdoms.
2. Annals of the Water-marshes.
3. The Western Excursion.
4. The Tale of the Western Room.
5. The Tale of the Guitar.
6. The Dream of the Red Chamber.
7. Diversions of a Studio.
8. The Contending States of the Eastern Chou.
9. Seeking a Match.
10. The Pear of Precious Beauty.
11. The Jade Sceptre.
12. Story of P'ing San and Leng Yen.
13. Exorcising the Devils.
14. History of the Apotheosis of Spirits.

These are all novels fairly well known, written with considerable force of imagination and literary skill. We shall not be able to deal at large with them all, but propose, for want of a better judge, to act as literary taster to our readers and try to give them an idea of the principal ones, what they are about, their various excellencies of style, and what are the chief characteristics of Chinese fiction, these being taken as the samples and criteria of judgment ?

As an instance of the sentiment of Chinese poetry, we select a poem entitled "The Maiden and the Flowers," which is taken from the novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber* :

THE MAIDEN AND THE FLOWERS.<sup>1</sup>

Flowers fading, flying, fly and fill the sky,  
Colors melt and fragrance fails,—who pities when they die ?  
Flossy festoons dance around the sweet spring arbor sides,  
To th' embroidered screen soft down-heads fasten clingly.

From her room a maiden issues pitying much the waning spring,  
Full of sorrow past expression for the beauty taking wing ;  
Through the brodered screen she passes with her flower hoe in hand,  
Stepping lightly 'mongst the blossoms, lest she trample anything.

Willow Floss and elm-tree scales unconscious fragrance pour,  
Unregarded peach and plum-bloom hover light the wind before ;  
Peach and plum may bloom anew as next year's spring comes round,  
But next year, alas ! she knows not who will stand within the door.

<sup>1</sup>A translation of a poem from the Chinese novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.





CHANG-FEI. THE YOUNGER OF THE THREE COVENANT BROTHERS. A BRAVE BUT RECKLESS WARRIOR AND WASSAILER. See p 18.  
(From the *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)

Fragrant nests are all completed ; 'tis the third moon's date.  
 'Neath the bridge the twittering swallows now have ceased to mate.  
 Though next year new flowers may bloom for plundering birds to peck,  
 Maiden gone and bridge deserted, nests may hang disconsolate.

Of the year the days are numbered just three hundred and three score ;  
 Full they are of fierce annoyance cutting winds and keen frost hoar.  
 Glowing charms and fresh young beauty cannot last for long,  
 Swift as morn they ripple past us to be found no more.

Blowing flowers by all are seen, but falling disappear ;  
 Sorely grieved the maiden buries what she held most dear ;  
 Hoe in hand before the steps she scatters secret drops,  
 Drops that mark the naked boughs with trace of many a tear.

Cuckoo notes have silent grown and twilight comes apace,  
 Hoe in hand through double doors her steps she must retrace.  
 Bright the lamp gleams on the wall where now she turns to sleep,  
 Chill her couch and cold the rain-drops beating on her window-case.

Sad she muses : What deep feeling strikes with double smart  
 Half of pity half resentment through my aching heart ?  
 Pity spring should come so sudden, with resentment for its flight,  
 Come so silent without warning and so soundlessly depart.

Yester' eve without the porch I heard a piteous strain,  
 'Twas the souls of birds and flowers departing as in pain ;  
 Souls of birds and souls of flowers cannot be detained ;  
 Birds are hushed and flowers in blushes all too swiftly wane.

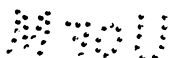
Would that from my ribbed sides a pair of wings might spring  
 That to heaven's height with the flowers I my flight might wing.  
 Yet on heaven's height  
 Where to find their gathering ?

No ! 'twere better the fair form embroidered shroud should wrap,  
 Gaiety be mounded o'er with fresh earth for a lap ;  
 That which cleanly entered life as cleanly depart,  
 Not abandoned to the gutter or defiled with foul mishap.

Poor dead flowers ! I buried you to-day within earth's breast,  
 Not divining when my body must be laid to rest ;  
 I, who buried flowers for pity, men would laugh to scorn :  
 Soon the mourner, as the flowers, to the grave must be addressed.

Thus the Spring must waste away, thus the flowers are gone ;  
 Nature's hues and human beauty perish one by one ;  
 One brief morning's dream of Spring and beauty hastens to old age ;  
 Falling flowers and dying mortals pass alike to the unknown.

One interesting fact about Chinese fiction should not be omitted. It came to us almost as a shock of surprise that all this branch of literature is comparatively modern. There are many dif-



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HSÜEN-TÊ. THE ELDER OF THE THREE COVENANT BROTHERS, AFTERWARDS RULER  
OF ONE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS INTO WHICH CHINA WAS DIVIDED,  
A. D., 221-685. See p. 20. (From the *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)

faculties connected with dates and authorship, but it seems certain that most if not all the books we have enumerated have been written within the last three dynasties. Of course the events related in the semi-historic novels belong to the distant past, the mighty actors and the stirring scenes of the "Chou" and the "Han" and the pious pilgrimages of the "Tang" dynasties. But we have not been able to trace the authorship of any novel to an earlier age than the times of the Mongols. There seems no doubt that the great masterpiece, the *San Kuo Tzu*, was produced at this time. This was China's golden age of fiction, but the production extended on through the "Ming" and into the present dynasty, to which the *Hung Lou Meng* and the *Liao Tsai* belong. The vast mass of fiction is later than *K'ang Hsi* and is being added to at the present time. This is a refreshing change. In reading Chinese books, ethics, poetry, history, it is so difficult to escape the belief that everything is a millennium old.

Let us commence our review with the work just referred to, the *San Kuo Tzu* or History of the Three Kingdoms, a novel of novels, which if it were the only work of fiction that the Chinese had ever produced, it would be impossible to deny their claim to be an imaginative people. It is of fine proportions, one hundred and twenty long chapters, the reputed author Lo Kuan Chung, a great genius gone down to oblivion with nothing left us but a name and this product of his pen. The story is semi-historical, that is about as historical as the Waverley novels, with which it may be compared, and the events cover nearly a century of time. As Shakespeare borrowed his historical facts from Hollingshead, so this author is indebted to an earlier but very dull work by Ch'en Hsou. Williams, in the *Middle Kingdom*, confuses the two. The work has been embellished with very racy notes from the pen of Mao Sheng San, a brilliant *littérateur*, and to these again are added most extensive introductions to each several chapter by Chin Sheng T'an, as much a prince among literary critics as Chu Shi was a "prince of commentators." These two great writers and scholars have agreed to set the stamp of their approval on the work. Their names take the place of the author's on the title page. Thus in reading text or notes or introductory passages you are amongst the best models of Chinese style. If asked what book in Chinese furnished the best example of the power of the Chinese language we should say the *San Kuo Tzu*. For simplicity, force, and fertility of imagination, it is unsurpassed in any language. The author has done his work with inimitable skill. While his diction is charged

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T'IAO CH'AN. A BEAUTIFUL SLAVE-GIRL EMPLOYED BY WANG YÜN TO COMPASS THE DEATH OF LUNG-CHO, WHICH SHE DID BY AN INTRIGUE IN WHICH SHE PLAYED CLEVERLY A DOUBLE PART BETWEEN HIM AND LÜ-PU. See p. 20. (From the *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)



with the richest metaphor it is chosen so simply that in spite of his use of "Wenli" particles the Chinese characterise it as a book in the Mandarin dialect. He has interspersed it with numerous rhymes of no very high order, more stilted and less poetic than the prose, but serving admirably the double purpose of mnemonics to assist the memory and morals to apply the lessons. He is a writer brilliant and perspicuous as Macaulay, simple as John Bunyan.

Let us try to interest our readers in him by offering, with apologies for its clumsiness, a prose translation of the little poem with which he introduces himself :

— "The ceaseless stream of time, how its waters roll ever eastward.  
The gifted and the brave are engulfed in its curling wave;  
And right and wrong, and success and defeat, are gone with a turn of the head.  
While as of old the green hills remain,  
In a trice the sun reddens to even.

"We old men, white-headed, at leisure; we spend our days as fishers and fuel  
gatherers on our little isle in the stream.  
We regard only the Autumn moon and the breezes of Spring.  
With a pot of common wine we gleefully meet together,  
And the past and the present, with all their concerns, are but food for a pleasant  
tale."

The story opens with the fall of the Han dynasty. At the accession of the Emperor Ling disorders break out at court, and gloomy omens presage distress. The scene passes to the neighborhood of P'ing Yuen in Shantung, where three mysterious brothers, possessors of magic powers, appear at the head of rebel hordes who gather in strength myriadfold. The monarch is feeble, his empire is ruled by eunuchs, but speeding through the kingdom are requisitions for volunteers to arm and oppose the "Yellow Cap" rebels. The spirit of loyalty is awakened, and now the heroes of the story, the three immortal brothers, appear on the scene. Liu Pei is of royal lineage but poor and unknown. He is twenty-eight years of age as he stands sighing before the placard summoning loyal subjects to battle, and Ch'ang Fei's abrupt greeting falls on his ears: "If a big fellow like you will not help his country, why do you sigh so deeply?" They adjourn to an inn, and while at their wine Kuan Yu in Ch'ang enters wheeling a barrow. He joins their conference and they declare their purpose to risk their all in upholding the house of Han. Liu Pei is a dealer in shoes and plaiter of mats, Kuan Yu in Ch'ang a refugee, Ch'ang Fei a seller of wine and a butcher of pigs. The famous Covenant of the Peach Or-

呂布



LÜ-PU, A BRAVE WARRIOR AND RIDER OF RED-HARE, THE FAMOUS HORSE.  
THE MURDERER OF TUNG-CHO, WHOSE FAVORITE HE HAD BEEN.

See p. 20. (From the *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)

chard is conceived in the happiest spirit of romance and forms one of the most striking of the many episodes with which the book abounds.

Let us take a short passage, once more with apologies for the translation; and here first our readers shall have a picture of a Chinese hero:

"He stood nine feet in height and his beard was two feet long. His face was like a heavy date, and his lips as rouge. With eyes like the red phoenix and brows where silk-worms might nestle: stern and lofty was his countenance, and his bearing awful and menacing."

This is the original of the countless images scattered all over China. You see one every time you enter a Kuan Ti temple, for this man is the Mars of China.

But now for the covenant. The peaches, he is careful to tell us, are in full bloom.

"Next day in the peach orchard they prepared a black ox and a white horse for sacrifice, with all other things needful, and the three men burnt incense, and after repeated obeisances pronounced their oath, which read: 'Liu Pei, Kuan Yu, and Ch'ang Fei, though of different families, yet as we have joined in brotherhood with heart and strength to succor distress and support the weak, to show loyalty to the Kingdom and to secure peace to the common people, care not to have been born at the same time, we would only that we might die together. May Imperial Heaven and our Royal Mother Earth search truly our hearts, and him who proves traitor to the vow or forgets this grace may Heaven and men combine to slay.'"

The oath ended, they did obeisance to Hsuen Te as elder brother, to Kuan Yu as next in rank, and to Ch'ang Fei as youngest.

Then when they had finished their sacrifice to heaven, they slew another ox, brought on the wine, and gathered the braves of their district, more than three hundred in number, to the peach orchard, where they drank to intoxication.

Next morning they are up betimes and off to the front of battle. With true epic instinct and with a fire and force of spirit, to which all material is plastic, the author proceeds to unroll the panorama of events. Tung Cho's usurpation and the wiles of the maiden Tiao Ch'an, Lu Pu's masculine beauty and invincible skill in battle, Ts'ao Ts'ao, matchless in guile, kingly in statecraft, and his path in warfare untraceable, Sun Chien strong and inexpugnable, the piteous state of the fugitive child-prince: on through treachery and bloodshed and ambuscade, the ceaseless shock of spears and ring of bucklers, with the twang of strong bow-strings and the hiss of poison-tipped arrows. Slowly and dubiously the three brothers with their small band rise to power, till the unfathomable Chu Ko



SUN CIEN. A NOBLEMAN WHO BECAME RULER OF THE THIRD KINGDOM.  
See p 20. (From the *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)

Liang is wooed from his retreat to become the Moltke of a rude wild age, and, espousing their side, unites magical resources with military strategy to make their cause victorious. He can call the rain and whistle the wind and shape wonderful automata that serve as battle steeds. He can read the secrets of men's breasts and fathom even Ts'ao Ts'ao's plans. All over the land the turmoil sweeps, the tide of battle rolling now east, now west, and now south, as Chu Ko goes to subdue the Man Tzu. A scene of wild confusion, change, and strife; battle everywhere; in palace and camp, in valley defiles, among mountain fastnesses, on land, on water, among the countless boats of Wu. And through it, all the one golden thread of loyalty, the "argument" which gives unity to the story, is never lost sight of, and through it all the mighty three, true as steel in triumph and reverse, hold on their steadfast way. At last the storm sinks through sheer exhaustion and ends, not in complete victory, for Kuan Yuin Ch'ang has been trepanned in battle and put to death by Sun Chien, and Chu Ko Liang's victorious career has been checked by Ssu Ma Yi. But Hsuen Te is king of Shu, and a settled compromise is reached in the formation of the Three Kingdoms.

This writer is great. He loves his characters, they are living and distinct, each has his individuality and separate portraiture, Ts'ao Ts'ao, subtle, treacherous; Kuan Yuin Ch'ang, brave, generous; Ch'ang Fei, rash, coarse, but true; Hsuen Te, thoughtful, kingly; they are men; loving, hating, striving, boastful, magnanimous, often doing generous deeds, always their hearts throbbing with strong human passion. Then how he has contrived to image all the life and all the manners of the age, so that the China of by-gone days glows on his pages, so that as his witty commentator says of the *San Kuo Tzu* that it is "*Wu shuo pu yu*"—"Nothing that it has not got." How fond he is of incidents and genealogies, with what loving tenderness or reiterated mention he dwells on this and on that. Hsia Hou Tun swallowing his own eye, Yu Chi's priestcraft, Hua To's magic in surgery, K'ung M'ing's harp, Yun Ch'ang's sword, Lu Pu's spear, and the famous horse Red Hare, that would "go a thousand li in a day and cross water and mount hills as though on even ground."

The *San Kuo Tzu* may be characterised in one comparison. It is the Iliad of China. This was first pointed out by Sir John Davis. Many of the qualities of old Homer are in it, consummate dramatic art (which alone redeems the Greek epic from insufferable dulness), supreme love of battle, extravagant admiration of



CHU-KO-LIANG, THE MOLTKE OF HIS AGE, A FAMOUS GENERAL OF THE HAN DYNASTY. See p. 20. (From the *San Ruo Yen Yi*.)

bravery and feats of arms, wide and universal sympathy which puts him in touch with all his characters, fondness for detail, and copiousness, which leads him to pour into it the most miscellaneous facts, lists, names; skill in blending the supernatural with the ordinary course of events (for the *San Kuo Tzu* has its machinery as much as the *Iliad*), consuming patriotism that makes everything interesting which affects his country. It scarcely yields to the *Iliad* in fire and spirit and descriptive power. Like the *Iliad*, it makes its heroes utter bragging speeches on the battle-field and do single-handed deeds of "derring-do." Like the *Iliad*, it mingles strategy with force and makes the sage the companion of the hero. Like the *Iliad*, it is the darling of a nation's heart because it has best imaged forth what they most love and admire. For it is immensely popular in China. Your 'rikisha coolie, if you are lucky in him, can probably tell you more of this book than I can. It is drawn upon copiously for the rude plays which the people passionately love, its incidents are repeated in endless recitals in the tea-shops, its heroes are glorified in the national imagination, one was a king, another is still a god, and the burning passion of a nation's life has poured itself into this tale of a glorious past. Strangely enough, not its author, but its lively annotator, like Homer, was blind. We will part with it with one other specimen, Kuan Kung's first great victory.

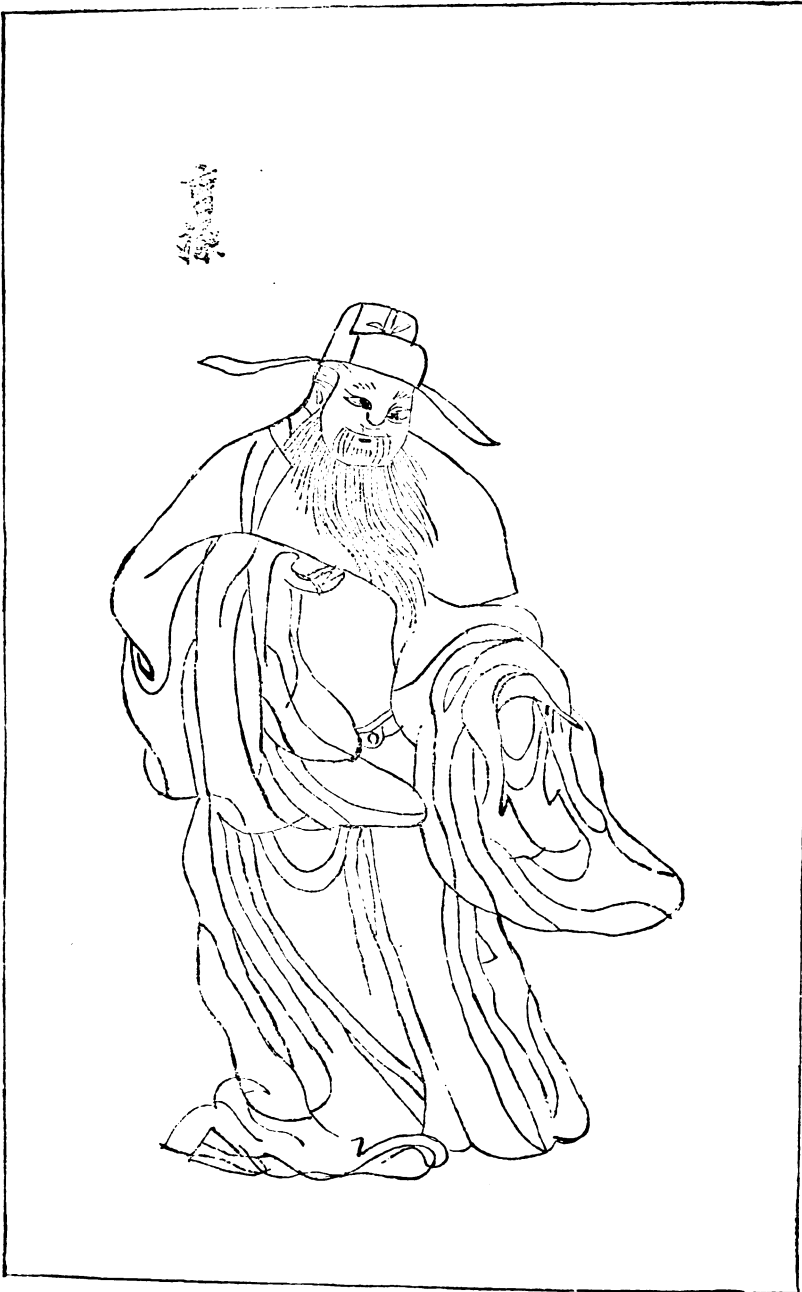
The champion, Hua Shiung, is vaunting in front of the army, and the princes are deliberating in the tent whom they shall send against him. He has just slain two bold heroes opposed to him and their hearts sink with misgiving.

The general, Shao, said "Alas my chief generals, Yen Liang and Wen Chou, have not yet come. If only we had a man here we need not fear Hua Shiung."

Before he had finished speaking from below the step which led into the tent a loud voice called out, "I will go, will cut off Hua Shiung's head and present it before your tent."

They all looked at him and saw a man who stood nine feet in height, with a beard two feet long. "His face was like a heavy date and his lips as rouge. With eyes like the red phoenix and brows where silkworms might nestle. Stern and lofty was his countenance, and his bearing awful and menacing."

Mark this. Precisely the same description as you have had before. Pope has a long passage in the introduction to his *Homer* in which he defends his constant practice of repeating his epithets. Here we have just the same trick. It is a remnant of oral epics. If



TS'AO-TS'AO, THE VILLAIN OF THE *San Kuo Yen Yi*. HIS SON BECAME  
RULER OF THE SECOND OF THE THREE KINGDOMS. See p. 22.  
(From the *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)



the matter is something which takes hold of the imagination the people like to hear it repeated, as children love to hear the story over again. There is just one addition :

"His voice was like a great bell," and as he stood before the tent Shao asked :

"Who is this?"

Kung Sun Tsan said, "This is Liu Shuen Te's brother, Kuan Yu."

Shao asked, "What rank does he hold?"

Tsan replied, "He follows Hsuen Te as a mounted bowman."

Then Yuen Shu cried angrily from the tent, "Do you wish to flout our princes with the want of a general? How is it that a common bowman dares to talk nonsense in this presence?"

But Ts'ao Ts'ao hurriedly stopped him saying: "He must be a brave man to speak so boldly, and methinks you would do well to try him. If he does not succeed it will be time enough to rebuke him."

"But," Yuen Shao objected, "if we send a mere bowman to fight Hua Shiung will laugh at us."

Ts'ao Ts'ao replied, "This man's appearance and bearing are uncommon. How should Hua Shiung know that he is only a bowman?"

"If I do not conquer let me be beheaded myself," said Kuan Yu.

Upon this Ts'ao Ts'ao heated a cup of wine to give him as he mounted his horse. "Pour out the wine," said Kuan Yu, "I go before I drink and be back directly."

He left the tent, took his sword, flew on to his horse, and the princes heard without the gate the thundering sound of drums and the clamorous shouts rising, as though the heaven was moved, as though the earth had fallen in; it was like the shaking of lofty peaks and the downfall of mountains. They all trembled with alarm, but before they could inquire what was the matter, the tinkling bells jingled as the horse came back into the ranks, and Yun Ch'ang appeared with the head of Hua Shiung and threw it on the ground.

And his wine was still warm.

He had done it in the time which it took the cup of wine, poured out before he started, to be cool enough to drink.

This is genius, the sparing touch of a master's hand. Do not misunderstand the comparison we made to the Iliad. We cannot

華陀



HUA-T'O. THE FAMOUS SURGEON. See p. 22. (From the *San Kuo Yen Yi*.)

pretend to the knowledge of the subject and the critical capacity which would enable us to compare Lo Kuan Chung's book with Homer's and adjudge their respective merits, nor could our readers so divest themselves of preconceived ideas as to take the Iliad in one hand and this in the other and give an unbiased judgment. Here is none of the fineness and delicacy of the old Greek spirit, and it is in prose, not verse. Yet it must be remembered that this prose, like all the best writings of the Chinese, notably the "four books," is most rhythmic, and maugre its prose style it is virtually an epic. Where it should stand in the list we will not venture to say, but it is the work of a most gifted artist, and whether we recognise the fact or not, it deserves as much to be ranked with the world's great books (perhaps in the humblest place) as the Iliad, the Æneid, the Jerusalem, the Orlando Furioso, the Niebelungen Lied, or the Paradise Lost.

This novel is typical of a whole class, the historical novel. The two others we have on our list of this kind are the *Annals of the Water Marshes* and the *Contending States of the Eastern Chou*. Of these we shall have no room for extended illustrations.

Take the latter one first. The Chinese regard it as something like authentic history. It is not a book for conscientious reading. The parts of it which alone can pretend to be serious history constitute such a crowd of names of persons, names of places, and dates, which with an elaborate show of order are jumbled into a hopeless state of confusion, that if your intellect withstands the strain, you are assured against a lunatic asylum for the rest of your days. But having in mind the delicacy of the cerebral organisation in man, we would not advise our readers to risk it. You are familiar with the confusion which arises in the unstudious mind from reading the book of Chronicles, and finding the events and dates of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel recorded contemporaneously. The writer hops to and fro from Israel to Judah with an alacrity which you cannot imitate, and you find yourself every now and then in Israel when you ought to be in Judah, hobnobbing with Jehosophat when you ought to be walking with Ahab in Naboth's vineyard. But that is lucidity itself compared with this. This is as though a man should undertake to write the history of the Saxon Heptarchy, carrying the whole seven kingdoms along on his back in one continuous narrative, and keeping the other six in your mind as he speaks of each one. Only, guessing at it, we should think there are thirty or forty of them instead of seven. The sole redeeming merit of the book is its lies. The author him-

self, or else one of his editors, warns you what to expect. In the introduction to the work he tells you that "all other light literature, such as the *Shui Hu*, the *Shih Yu*, and the *Feng Shen Yen Yi*, are a pack of falsehoods, the *San Kuo Tzu* alone having a measure of truth in it, but the *Lieh Kuo* is different, being true in every detail and in every sentence," that as "he is unable to record the whole truth, where should he have the time to add make-ups, and though on this account it is less readable, yet its thoroughly reliable character is its recommendation." *Sancta Simplicitas!* And then we have amongst court chronicles and battle scenes, unilluminated by a spark of fire or life, such an endless series of absurd and superstitious legends as were never launched on the world before or since. They are all detailed in a tone of pious severity, but that does not hinder them from being so extravagant, miraculous, and scandalous, that Herodotus would blush to own them. It is the most magnificent collection of historic yarns which China, as prolific in these as it is in proverbs, can boast. These, and these alone, if you skip judiciously, make the book readable.

In the *Annals of the Water Marshes* we come back to a book much like the *Three Kingdoms* but of a lower strain. It contains less history and more personal narrative. Its style is phenomenal. Coarse, direct, graphic, intense, each word is like a fierce stroke from a graver's tool. If you have any notion that Mandarin Chinese is unexpressive, read this book. Here is the rude strength of the mountain quarryman, who cleaves deep into the heart of the rock; wild, fierce, sincere, Dante himself is not more terse and vivid. In the one quality of power, rugged, relentless, gloomy, like a storm-beat precipice, there is no book in Chinese to equal it, and no book in any language to surpass it. It is all pictures, struck with sharp, rough, but masterful strokes, and all the pictures are silhouettes.

In one respect this book is the very opposite of the *Three Kingdoms*. That rings all through with the clarion-tone of loyalty; this echoes only the harsh and menacing tone of rebellion. It represents the sinister side of the shield, discontented China. Its plot is laid in the time of Hui Tsung, one of the Sung emperors, and it is occupied in detailing the exploits of one hundred and eight famous outlaws whose stronghold was Liang San amongst the "Water Marshes." The stern, implacable demand of the undaunted rebel spirit for a justice which the law is too feeble and too corrupt to give, is enforced with terrible emphasis, and, as in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, or Schiller's *Robbers*, we get a deep insight into

cruelties and oppressions done in an age when right is defenceless and authority takes the side of the wrong-doer. This book illustrates one somewhat repulsive side of Chinese humor. The fact is not generally known in the Western World, but nearly every one who has been long resident in China is aware that he is known among the natives around him by a name which he neither derived from his parents nor received at the baptismal font, one quite unclassical and generally not flattering. You can usually get to know other people's but not your own. Nobody can nickname like the Chinese. Their genius in this direction is preternatural. In this novel we have a fine display of it. "The Little Whirlwind," "Jade Unicorn," "The Leopard-Headed," "The Devil's Neighbor," "Hail-Fire," and "The Black Whirlwind," are but a few of them. The book is the work of a powerful mind, though it is hung over with menace and gloom. Unscrupulous, defiant, stern as the fates, but true in covenant and brave in conflict, these men and women are not of the smiling, temperate, human sort; they are terrible; beings of the cave and the mountain den. On account of its subject the book is a forbidden one, but in China that is no hindrance to your getting it if you want to.

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But now let us give our readers a change. We are tempted here to let a bit of our secret peep out and tell them at once that Chinese fiction broadly divides itself in our mind into a three-fold classification; the historic, the mythic, and the sentimental. History, under the potent spell of that mighty magician, the imaginative faculty, shades off on the spiritual side into the formless region of myth, where man vainly tries to express the mysterious and inexpressible side of his nature, and on the other side melts into the sentimental, where he finds happy play for its human side.

Now of the mythical novels we have four specimens on our list—*The Exorcising of the Devils*, *Diversions of a Studio*, *The Apotheosis of Spirits*, and *The Western Excursion*. This is a very important branch of Chinese fiction and is the fountain-head to which you must go if you would explore the folk-lore of the East. And it is only by knowing this that you can get at the roots of that inextricably twisted jungle-forest of superstition which chokes and shadows the Chinese mind. *The Exorcising of the Devils* is a kind of *Jack the Giant Killer* allegory. *The Diversions of a Studio* is a collection of short stories, something in the line of the *Arabian Nights*, where magical transformations and scenes of glittering enchantment abound, but all on the hypothesis that foxes

constitute an intermediate order of being between the human and the demoniac, and that they assume at will the form of beautiful men and women. Their appearances are always sudden, like that of fairies, and, like fairies, they come with rich gifts, but intercourse with them is baneful. The book is exquisitely written in the most refined classic style, but as there is a translation we will say no more about it. About the third one we will say nothing at all, because we have not read it. We will take the *Shih Yu*, The Western Excursion, as our type of the mythical novel.

Every one knows of the journey of Shuen Tsang to India to seek the Buddhist Canons. It was a journey full of danger, hardship and marvel. The author of our story is said to have made a similar journey in Mongol times. However that may be, he has used Shuen Tsang's pilgrimage as the foundation on which to build a superstructure containing all the most noted myths of Buddhist and Taoist beliefs. It is at the same time an extended allegory of a very subtle character, running into spiritual meanings of the first and second and even the third degree. Shuen Tsang is supposed to be the brother of one of the T'ang emperors who had become a priest, and who made a pious vow to perform the journey to India and fetch the holy books. But as there are always difficulties in the good man's path, he soon finds that this is no holiday excursion, but quite another guess matter. As soon as he begins to turn his steps westward his way is obstructed by the most unexampled hindrances. There are giants that want to eat him up and sorceresses that would fain betray him. He is put to it most sorely, for all the nether regions seem astir to prevent his progress. But on the other hand the celestial powers are propitious, and by dint of giving him some most marvellous travelling companions, and frequent interferences from the goddess of mercy herself, he is kept scatheless. Even the imperial sovereign of the skies, the great Yu Huang, is deeply interested in these bustling affairs. The first thing he knows he is caught up and swept off on the wings of a whirlwind by a beautiful enchantress who would have him as the companion of her bower, and his protectors have the most unheard of trouble to get him out of her clutches. He finds a betrayed maiden weeping sore in the forest, buried up to her waist in the earth, rescues her by the aid of his travelling companion, and takes her with him to the nearest monastery, full of pity for her distress. But this lovely maiden is a complete fraud, as like Armida in fact as you can expect any one woman to be like another. Sun Shing Che, his right-hand man, is at his prayers at midnight, when she

steals on him and assails him with the most seductive arts. But he is a deep, suspicious customer, and has been all along persuaded that there is something wrong with her. He is not to be cajoled, but in the twinkling of an eye he finds her transformed into an Amazon of fearful might, vomiting smoke and fire, and wielding a magic sword of preternatural sharpness. In fact, you soon begin to see that this is a *Pilgrim's Progress* and a *Faerie Queene* all in one.

This Sun Shing Che is himself a most wonderful being. The author has so far anticipated the Darwinian theory, or rather Bishop Wilberforce's jocular description of it, as to derive his origin from a monkey. He has been immortalised by the gods, and in virtue of necromatic study, is gifted with extraordinary powers of levitation, by means of which, like Puck, he can "put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes." He has another trifling accomplishment in the way of being able to transform himself at will into the form and faculty of any member of the animal or insect kingdom. He has had escapades in the heavenly regions, such as stealing the golden peaches of Paradise, and letting loose the steeds of the immortals. A burly, humorous, infinitely mischievous kind of Puck. He is a champion to one's mind, wielding an iron staff with golden bands, which he got out of the sea-dragon's cave under the ocean, which was several thousand catties in weight originally, but which he judiciously reduced by a few hundred catties, so as to make it handy. When he finds it inconvenient to carry, it can be diminished to the magnitude of a needle, which he sticks in his ear. With a travelling companion like this and two or three others, notably one who fights with a rake, the devout pilgrim has a good prospect of getting through.

Many, however, are the risks they run, and most various the inducements held out to them to abandon the object of their pilgrimage. Here is a specimen of their adventures.

They are treading their way westwards through green hills and shining waters, where they behold an endless luxuriance of vegetation, and where flowers of every hue abound. But the way is long and evening draws on apace, so the chief pilgrim puts the somewhat human inquiry, "Where shall we go to rest for the night?" The reply of Shing Che is in the most approved style of pious devotion, but not comforting to flesh and blood:

"My father, he who has left home and become a priest must dine on the wind and lodge in the water, lie down under the moon

and sleep in the frost; everywhere is his home, why then ask where shall we rest?"

This is all very well for our lightsome Puck, but Pa Chieh, who is the burden-bearer and carries the pilgrim's baggage, which is not inconsiderable, regards the division of labor as unequal; and at any rate would like some more matter-of-fact arrangement for the night. At a blow from Sun Shing Che's staff Shuen Tsang's horse has started forward at a great pace, so that from the brow of a hill Shuen Tsang espies in the distance a grove of cypress trees, beneath the shade of which is a large enclosure, which they decide to make for as a place of rest. On approaching it they find that it is all that heart could desire, in fact a spacious establishment of some magnificence, as near a palace as they can expect to come at in those regions. As there is no sign of inhabitants, Shing Che makes his way inside, and finds that it offers very attractive quarters. While he is looking round on black varnished tables and gilded pillars a large scroll meets his eye on which the motto is certainly inviting: "Gentle willows hung with floss, and on the bridge the level sun at eve. In snowy flakes the scattered bloom has filled the court with spring."

While he is examining this, a lady about middle life, but of very charming appearance and bearing, steps into the court from an inner room with the inquiry, "Who is it that has ventured to intrude upon the household of a widow?" In truth according to Eastern etiquette he is in an embarrassing situation. But the lady is most affable, and as he explains their condition, cordially invites them in to rest for the night. They all enter, and Pa Chieh, who is by no means beyond human infirmities, casts more than one sly glance at the lady, whose attractions are thus described in rhyme:

"The clouds of hair upon her brow aslant like phoenix wings,  
And set with many a precious pearl her pendant earrings.  
No artifice of 'paint' she needs her natural charms to aid,  
Yet gay and winsome is she still as any youngest maid."

The natural way of opening acquaintance is by describing their respective circumstances, and on her part the widow lady tells them that she has been left in possession of riches in abundance, her husband's parents having died as well as her husband, leaving her in charge of three beautiful daughters with three very pretty names—Truth, Love, and Pity. There is nothing like a Chinese novel for a surprise, and our private opinion is that the holy pilgrims were taken at a disadvantage of an unwarrantable kind, when the lovely widow made a plump proposal to them, not simply



on her own behalf, but also on the part of her daughters three, and in a very business-like way pointed out the advantages the four pilgrims would derive from a quadruple marriage, which would secure to each of them a charming wife and store of wealth for the rest of their days. In fact, in her view they cannot do better than finish their journey here and be "happy ever afterwards." Inducements are manifold. She has mountain lands for trees and fruit, and broad fields for grain, and flooded fields for rice, and of each kind more than five thousand acres. She has horses and oxen, pigs and sheep beyond all count, and farmsteads some sixty or seventy, on her vast domain. The grain of a dozen years is rotting in her granaries for want of eating, and mountains of silks and satins are being moth-eaten for want of wear. As for silver and gold, if the four pilgrims should turn prodigals they could not contrive to spend it in a lifetime. Prosperous Job himself was but a portionless beggar compared with her. To say nothing of herself and her lovely daughters, and though she is becomingly modest about her own attractions, they are not only the most surpassingly beautiful but the most completely accomplished of living maidens.

All this Shuen Tsang hears unmoved except by anger, not suspecting her guile but enraged that she should so tempt him from his heavenly purpose. Then ensues a contest between the lady and himself, of which we had hoped to offer our readers a translation, but no ingenuity we can command will avail to twist it into presentable English verse. The respective advantages of a life of worldly ease and of celibate devotion are sung by the two champions, and at the conclusion of the wordy contest the lady, finding her persuasions futile, angrily retires, slamming the door on them and leaving them seated in the hall disconsolate and unprovided for. During this scene the covetous Pa Chieh has taken another view of the situation. He would have been glad to close with the widow's terms, but seeing that may not be, he steals round to the back and secures a private interview, in which he seeks to arrange a marriage on his own account. Certain difficulties arise, mainly on account of his lack of masculine attractions, for as Sun Shing Che wears a monkey's form, so he wears a pig's, and his long face and big ears are objectionable. But the lady is not altogether uncompliant. She is at once so far mollified as to provide for the entertainment of the travellers, and in the meantime, through the prescience of Sun Shing Che, Pa Chieh's clandestine interview is made known to his chief. They thereupon, after sundry passages between them, insist upon his retiring within the household in the

character of a son-in-law, the other three remaining merely as guests in the guest-chamber.

But now a new difficulty of a knotty kind starts up. The widow is apparently willing to give him one of her three daughters to wife, but for the life of her cannot decide which is to be the favored one. If she weds him to Truth, Love will feel neglected, and if to Love or to Pity, Truth will naturally feel aggrieved. In this dilemma, or rather trilemma, a very cunning expedient occurs to her. She proposes to blindfold him with a handkerchief and then turn the three girls in on him and let him have whichever he can catch. Perhaps it was a supreme proof of courage, though not of discretion, for Pa Chieh is quite willing to do wittingly what many a man has had to do in real life unwittingly—play at blind man's buff for a wife. Yet as all three were consummately beautiful and accomplished, his chances could not be said to be so bad.

But alas! this was only another of those "best laid schemes" destined to "gang a glee." The bandage was tied over his eyes, he found himself groping in darkness, the tinkling sound of female trinkets was all around him, the odor of musk was in his nostrils, like fairy forms they fluttered about him, but he could no more grasp one than he could clutch a shadow. "Right and left, to and fro, he groped and fumbled. More female forms than he could count were round him, but in vain he thought to hold one. One way and another he ran till he was too giddy to stand, and could only stumble helplessly about. Eastward it was a pillar he embraced, westward he ran against a wooden partition, forwards against the leaves of the door, backwards into the wall, bumping and banging, head and heels, until with swollen tongue and bruised head, he could only sit down panting."

Thus reduced to a state of mingled exhaustion and imbecility, he was fain to seek a parley, for, as he expressed it, they "were much too slippery for him." Then his mother-in-law by anticipation unloosed his bandage and gently broke to him the intelligence that it was not their slipperiness but their extreme modesty which had prevented a capture, each of them being generously wishful to forego her claims in favor of one of her sisters. In fine, it was the old story, so true also in real life, that a lady is extremely difficult to catch when she is unwilling to be caught. Upon this he becomes very importunate and urges his suit in a most indiscriminate fashion for either one of her daughters, or for the mother herself or for all three or all four. This is beyond all conscience, but as an escape from their perplexity, the widow proposes a new crite-

tion of choice. Each of her daughters wears a certain garment, an inner vest, embroidered in jewels and gold. He is to be allowed to



A CURIOUS GAME AT BLIND MAN'S BUFF.  
(From an illustrated edition of the *Shih Yu*.)

try on one of these, and, in case he can get it on, he is to marry the lady who owns it. He consents, only modestly stipulating that

he shall have a try with all three and succeed according to his deserts. There is no difficulty as to size, for, as most people know, all garments whatever in China would be roomy enough for Goliath. The good lady brings one in and he finds that one enough, for no sooner has he got it on, just as he is tying the cord round his waist, than it transforms itself to strong bands of rope wound round every limb. He rolls over in excruciating pain, and as he does so the curtain of enchantment falls and the beauties and the palace disappear.

Next morning his three companions wake up, also to find the scene changed. "As the east shone white they opened their eyes and raised their heads, only to see that the great mansion and lofty hall, the carved beams and ornamental pillars had all disappeared, and they had been sleeping all night on the ground under the cypress grove."

But where was their errant companion, the eager bridegroom of the adventure? After a short search he was found bound fast to a tree and yelling with pain. They cut him down bruised and crestfallen, to pursue the journey sadder but wiser, and subject to many a gibe from his mischievous companions.

Or as a specimen of the marvellous play of imagination which this book affords, take the episode of the burning mountain. The pilgrims find it getting hotter and hotter as they proceed, and on resting for the night at a village by the roadside are told that they can go no further in that direction, as there is an enormous mountain in their path all on fire which reduces the whole region to sterility and which they can neither cross nor get round. Our active lieutenant and man of all work, by the simple expedient of questioning a vendor of pulse at the door, learns that the only way to deal with this obstacle is to obtain the loan of a certain palm-leaf fan, *made of iron*, which will put the fire out. It is in the hands of the iron-fan fairy, who dwells in a palm-leaf cave on a mountain called Ts'ui Yun San, Beautiful Cloud Mountain. It is fifteen hundred li away. "That is of no consequence," says Wu Shing Che, and before you can wink he was there. But he finds it no such simple matter. This fairy, called also Lo Sah, is wife to the ox-demon king, and a female of an uncertain disposition. Besides, while she is a sort of aunt to our doughty adventurer, he suddenly recollects that she has an ancient grudge against him, and it is more than likely that she will not put this indispensable fan at his disposal. However, he goes on the principle that "faint heart never won fair lady," and puts a good face on the matter.



THE QUENCHING OF THE BURNING MOUNTAIN.  
(From an illustrated edition of the *Shih Yu*.)

The old lady is distinctly pugilistic, and they turn to with sword and staff and have a royal battle there on the mountain. Sun Shing is likely to get the better of her, but she lends him the use of the fan in a sense he did not anticipate. She gives it one wave, and to his amazement he is blown on the breath of a hyperborean hurricane, against which he is helpless, and alights only by holding hard on to a rock by both hands, fifty thousand li away, being lucky to stop at that. Here he is helped by a friend, who gives him a pill which he is to swallow, and then he can stand comfortably in the strongest wind that ever blew. Away he hies back, and this time the fan waves in vain. Then the old woman retires inside and slams the door on him. He turns into a bee, flies through a crack of the door, and after a most surprising battle gets the fan and makes off with it like lightning.

So now he will succeed, he thinks, and he will show his companions how it is done. They go as far toward the mountain as they can for the heat and flame. Then "Shing Che raised the fan, and advancing near to the fire waved it with all his might. At the first wave the blazing fire of the hill burst forth with intense heat. At the second wave it increased a hundred-fold. He tried a third, and the flame rose at least ten thousand feet high and singed all the hair off his legs before he could get back to Shuen Tsang. He cried out, 'Back! Back! Fire! Fire!' Shuen Tsang mounted his horse, and they all had to run for their lives."

Here's a pretty kettle of fish. The old aunty has played him a jade's trick. She has cunningly given him the wrong fan. We have no time to follow it in detail. Amongst other things, he learns, for there is deep symbolism here, that this fire-flaming mountain was kindled by himself, goodness knows how long ago. But he is not to be beaten. He personates the old lady's husband, who is playing truant with a younger fair, and goes through a very sentimental scene with her in this character, not, however, passing the bounds of propriety, if you remember the maxim, "All's fair in love and war." By this treacherous device he worms the secret out of her, and finds that the right fan, the genuine article, is a little thing, the size of an apricot leaf, but which can be magnified by touching a point in its stalk into twelve feet long. This he gets and again makes off. However, the ox-demon king is on his track, and as personification is a game at which two can play, he appears in the guise of Sun Shing's companion offering to carry the fan, which, that worthy having magnified, he does not know how to minimize, and on its being handed to him makes away back to the

cave with it. Now Sun Shing's blood is up, and after a tremendous fight he gets final possession of it, and is once more before



THE STEALING OF THE MAGIC FAN.  
(From an illustrated edition of the *Shih Yu*.)

the mountain with his companions. In the meantime the "machinery" is invoked, various celestial beings are on the scene wait-

ing for the "all-important event," and after due ceremonial "he took the fan, swung it one wave with all his might, and that fiery-flaming mountain slowly settled to rest, and the blaze went out. Shing Che, greatly pleased, fanned one more stroke, and softly sighing winds began to move; at the third wave over the whole heavens the clouds gathered dense, and the gentle rain fell thick and pattering."

Scandinavian legends and Thor's journey to Jotunland cannot surpass this.

We have now only the sentimental novels to deal with. Of these there are seven on our list, but their characteristics must be summarised. The best known amongst them, either to foreigners or natives, is the *Dream of the Red Loft*. We are not ourselves enamored of it; there are some pretty sentimental songs in it, but a weary lot of tiresome repetition of trivial details. Its recommendation to foreigners is that it is full of conversations in first-rate Pekinese; but if aristocratic life in China is anything like this picture of it—dressy, vain, empty, proud, idle, sentimental, licentious—it is a wretched existence.

*Seeking a Match* is a very surprising story, and affords the most graphic representation of the wiles and tricks of the unscrupulous Celestial to be found anywhere. The *Western Room* and the *Guitar* are the work of great artists. They are called novels, but are dramas of the operatic kind, the dialogue only being prose.

By a sentimental novel we understand one the subject of which is love, but as the marriage laws in China differ from those in England, our notions on this head get a rude shock. In a certain sense the Chinese novelist may be said to enjoy a great advantage over his brother artist of the West. When, for instance, as in one of these stories, a remarkably smart Chinese girl who is sued by an unwelcome lover, has cleverly contrived to juggle the engagement document, which a treacherous uncle has compelled her to write, and to put in the name and age of her cousin, who is plain-looking, to take her place on the wedding day, so that the unwelcome suitor is successfully married to another girl; you would expect that to be the end of the matter, and that the author had nothing for it but to bring in the right bridegroom, marry the heroine according to her heart's wish, and make them "happy ever afterwards." But the Celestial novelist is in no such straits, because the villain of the piece, though a good deal disgusted at being so tricked, need not in the least change his purpose. Having one wife, in a country where there are no laws against bigamy,



does not preclude his having another, and thus his author is at full liberty to conceive a whole series of ingenious schemes and to amuse us with the story of their frustration.

Or again, where a young man is already engaged, and strangely enough a young lady disguised as a youth proposes to him on her own account, and he on his part is honest enough to tell her of his engagement, you would think that enough to discourage the maiden. By no means. She readily signifies her willingness to accept the position of number two, and though we might think this somewhat lowered her dignity, we see the disparity of ethical standards when the author represents this as a supreme act of nobleness. Chinese heroines, by the way, are fond of assuming the masculine disguise.

We learn from these stories that the supreme height of ambition is to become a Chuang Yuen, that is, the first on the list for the Han Lin, which is the highest degree in the Government examinations. There is only one every two years, so its possessor is covered with unheard-of glory. He has plucked the "red olive spray" and is the man the Emperor himself "delighteth to honor." He is courted, caressed, famous, wealth showers in on him, beauty languishes at his feet, and he can have as many sweethearts as he likes, and marry them all when he pleases.

This class of novels is very extensive, and ranges from beautiful stories, told with unaffected simplicity and grace down to shady compositions which you can only compare with Boccaccio and Smollett. It seems to be the general belief that Chinese novels are peculiarly impure, that in fact they have no innocent novels. Stent, in the preface to his dictionary, tells us that he wanted to translate one, but "found none that he thought readable in English from the subject being utterly absurd, filthy, or childish, in fact untranslatable." To this one is bound to say he had read little or chosen badly or was a poor judge. Of the fourteen novels on our list six are so entirely innocent that they might be translated almost verbatim for a child to read, and not one of them is worse than Fielding's *Tom Jones*, which Macaulay, who will hardly be accused of low taste, declared to be the best novel in the English language. There are bad novels in Chinese, which far be it for us to defend, books to which we might well apply the saying of Carlyle concerning a novel of Diderot's, "if any mortal creature, even a reviewer, be again compelled to glance into that book, let him bathe himself in running water, put on a change of raiment, and be unclean until the even." But, on the other hand, we cannot afford

to give way to a squeamish affectation which would compel us to close our Shakespeare.

It is a proof of the high degree of elaboration to which fiction literature in China has been carried, that most of their novels are thickly interspersed with poems of all orders of merit. No stronger evidence could be afforded of the fact that, whatever they lack, it is not literary finish. If anything, they have this in excess. These poems are introduced in a variety of ways. The hero sends one in a *billet-doux* to the heroine, or he overhears her singing one, or perhaps a poetic contest is struck up, the fine on defeat being generally the compulsory drinking of so many extra flagons of wine. Wine-drinking and poetising almost invariably go together in Chinese novels, though whether they do so in real life we are unable to say. Above all things, every man who sets up to be anything in the way of a hero in Chinese fiction, must be prepared to extemporise by the ream in inimitable poetry.

Some attempt, however brief, to set forth the characteristics of this poetry should be made.

The treatment is very conventional, partly because the Chinese poet has had before him no great variety of models and partly because he is bound by mechanical fetters compared to which the most difficult Western verse is licence itself. It is nothing to see him make the same rhyme in from six to a dozen consecutive lines, and the laws which govern metre are indefinitely more complicated than our own. A favorite method is to rhyme the first, second, and fourth lines, leaving the third without any rhyme at all. This seems to have a peculiar charm for the native ear, though we have never been able to appreciate it.

There is an exasperating tendency to repeat over and over again the same succession of images. Indeed we do not know what the Chinese poet would do without his "spring winds" and "autumn moons" or if forced to speak of ladies' eyes as anything else than "autumn waves," their hair as anything other than "raven-clouds" or of their feet, crippled with bandaging to the bewitching measurement of two inches, as anything but "golden lilies"; and the hairs of his pencil would stand awry with dismay if you robbed him of his chrysanthemums and peonies, his cinnamon, peach, and plum, his willows and poplars. Even these calamities, however, are light compared with the wild despair which would fill his soul and reduce his muse to dumbness if some barbarian sportsman should recklessly shoot that darling phoenix, without which poetry could not be written, or exterminate his dragons,

cranes, gibbons, his swallow, cuckoo, and oriole, and that ubiquitous pair of mandarin ducks which used to adorn the surface of English cottage dinner plates.

The only vein of feeling which the Chinese poet seems to have succeeded in giving adequate expression to is melancholy. We have never seen in Chinese poetry a pure gush of fresh and genuine delight. When they try to express pleasure they aim to be funny, and generally end in a clumsy and coarse burlesque. A

一 樵 淚 若 胭 侍 天 樹 桃 凭 閒 風 花 桃 東 簾 桃  
聲 悴 眼 將 脂 女 機 樹 花 欄 苔 透 解 花 風 外 花  
杜 花 觀 人 鮮 金 燒 烟 桃 人 院 簾 憐 簾 有 桃 簾  
宇 遮 花 淚 豔 盆 破 封 葉 向 落 櫳 人 外 意 花 外  
春 樵 淚 比 何 進 鴛 一 亂 東 門 花 花 開 揭 簾 東  
歸 悴 易 桃 相 水 鴛 萬 紛 風 空 滿 也 仍 簾 內 風  
盡 人 乾 花 類 來 錦 株 紛 位 掩 庭 愁 舊 櫳 人 賴

寂 花 淚 淚 花 香 春 烘 花 茜 斜 庭 隔 簾 花 人 桃  
寞 飛 乾 自 之 泉 酣 照 綻 裙 日 前 簾 中 欲 與 花  
簾 人 春 長 顏 飲 欲 樓 新 偷 闌 春 消 人 窺 桃 簾  
櫳 倦 盡 流 色 醺 醒 壁 紅 傍 子 色 息 比 人 花 內  
空 易 花 花 人 胭 移 紅 葉 桃 人 倍 風 桃 簾 隔 晨  
月 黃 樵 自 之 脂 珊 模 凝 花 自 傷 吹 花 不 不 妝  
痕 昏 悴 媚 淚 冷 枕 糊 碧 立 凭 情 透 瘦 捲 遠 懶

Chinaman is coarse in his pleasures, and only sadness refines him.

Yet these poems often contain exquisitely beautiful and gracefully simple language, while there is no speech in the world which can approach Chinese for terseness of expression. It is not easy to put into fourteen English syllables what the Chinese poet expresses readily in seven. The *Dream of the Red Loft* contains about the best of these sentimental poems which we have seen.

Some of the dramatic novels especially are of surprising artistic merit. Our own particular favorite is the *Guitar*, which ought

to be put into English. For simplicity, naturalness, and pathos, it is exquisite. How T'sai Po Chieh's father would have him go to the capital to get his degree, while his fond mother would keep him at home, and the wife, just past the honeymoon, is divided between love and duty, but consents for him to go. How he is away long and there is no news, and famine comes, and they have nothing to eat, and the daughter goes sadly on distribution days to receive the pittance which government is doling out to the famishing. How there is no grain in the granary and the little given to her is stolen from her on her way home. How mother suspects her of eating good food in secret and giving them bad, whereas she has eaten her meals alone because she had nothing but chaff to eat while they were complaining of better food. How father dies, then mother, and she is alone and helpless, but cuts off her hair and sells it on the street to buy a coffin, and scoops the grave with her own hand, carries the earth to cover them in her apron, then, worn out with hunger and exertion, she goes off to sleep. Then the spirit of the mountain region comes to her in her dream, whispers good cheer, and tells her heavenly guards attend her, and she is bidden to take her guitar and beg her way to the capital, where she shall find her husband. All the pathos of desertion is in it; it is a thing woven out of tenderness and sorrow.

Meanwhile the other side of the picture is skilfully contrasted with this. The husband, the Chuang Yuan of his year, fêted, feasted, courted, and a great general, Niu, will have him as husband to his only child. His refusal is set aside by the Emperor himself, and against his will he is married to the matchless beauty; but in the bridal chamber he is haunted by the thought of his absent parents and wife. The motives of the actors are different from those by which we should be swayed and the hero's course of conduct different from that which a noble Englishman would pursue in a similar situation; but we must take the author's reading of the customs and sentiments of his race, and then we shall see that he has combined his scenes and characters with surpassing skill.

We have attempted a rendering of a somewhat extended scene with which we hope our readers will not be too impatient. The portions we have put into blank verse to correspond with the original should rhyme, but the work of translation was too difficult, and we have sacrificed everything in order to give, as literally as might be, the matter, not the form, of the original. We must also ask our readers to remember that this drama is operatic, which

must account for the characters addressing the audience, when, as we should think, they ought to be speaking to one another. Let our readers bear in mind the position of the bridegroom in this scene. He is remembering his first wife and duty while in the presence of his second wife and pleasure.

*An inner court. [Enter bridegroom.]*

Bridegroom—

The court with shade of locust trees is thick,  
And odors of the lotus weight the screens.  
How shall I pass this never-ending day?  
By leaning idly on the balustrade,  
Or spreading out my mat of Shiang make  
And dreaming of the hills about my home  
Till graceful bamboos flirting in my face,  
Or else the wind shall startle me from sleep?  
Those waving boughs seen on the water's face  
Show like to golden palaces. The screens  
Reflect the deep green shade of this lone place.  
The day is long, with naught to do but sigh.  
Though pleasant wine invites from fragrant flask,  
I feel too idly sad to pour and drink,  
But, ruminating with my bitter thoughts,  
Remember how the year has passed away  
And yet no tidings come of those I left.  
Life is but such a year that hurries man  
With swift exchange of cold and heat to age.  
I'll tell my sorrows on my jewelled lute.  
Ho, there, attendant! bring my lute and music book.

*[Enter attendant.]*

Attendant—

A yellow scroll to while away the time  
And a harp to play to the passing breeze.  
Sir, here are your lute and your book.

Bridegroom—

Call my two study pages.

*[Enter two boys.]*

Boys—

From earliest childhood we've been trained  
To keep the study neat;  
A pleasant life indeed, say some;  
We think it not so sweet.  
For oh! 'tis weary waving fans  
And burning incense still,  
And by the flow'ry arbor sides  
The fierce east wind is chill.  
And then there's nothing else to do  
But daily meals to keep;  
And, after we can no more eat,  
To go to bed and sleep.

Bridegroom—

The day is pleasant with its cool, fresh air ;  
I'm sitting here alone with naught to do ;  
I'll take my harp and practise at some tune  
To chase away my melancholy thoughts.  
You three employ yourselves : one take the fan,  
And one burn sticks of incense in the court,  
The third may put the books in order for me,  
And none of you be idle at your task."

All—

" We understand sir !" [*Bridegroom plays.*]

Bridegroom—

" That I may greet the strings auspiciously  
I sit and face the perfumed south and play,  
Yet conscious am I that, beneath my fingers,  
The music has another meaning from of old.  
For all the running streams and lofty hills  
Before my eyes seem blown by evil winds :  
So they showed gloomy when I left my home.  
At every pause th' expression turns to grief,  
The wail of widow'd swan or lone gibbon,  
Or like the phoenix parted from his mate.  
Ah me ! why does the sound of death hang on the string ?  
As 'twere a mantis killing cicadas.  
In heaven's blue field the sun is clouded o'er,  
So when King Wang turned to a cuckoo bird  
Bright marriage omens turned to evil fate.  
The sweet sounds that I look for fail me now,  
They're broken strings that cannot be pieced out.

[*To his attendants.*]

The lady is about to come forth ; you must all retire.

Attendants—

" We attend, sir !" [*Aside.*] " Just so, the fortunate have men to wait on them ; the unfortunate must wait on men." [*Exeunt attendants.*]

[*Enter bride.*]

Bride—

" The tenderest green shows in the tanks of flowers  
Round which the fumigated air is playing,  
And glimpses of the bridal chamber show,  
With nursling swallows flying round its roof.  
The flowered mats are spread and cool silk screens,  
There's song from golden strings, the goblet's warm,  
And happily the fierce heat cannot strike  
Within this cool pavilion with its waters.

DIALOGUE.

Bride—

So you are here, sir, practising on your lute ?

Bridegroom—

Yes, I had nothing to do, and I thought I would amuse myself in this way.

Bride—

I have heard before that you are a most skilful musician. But why come away where the sounds of silk and bamboo spend themselves on vacancy, unheard by other ears than your own? I count this a lucky day on which I have heard you practising. May I not make bold to ask that you will play me one more tune?

Bridegroom—

You would listen to the lute, lady? What tune would you like me to play you? What say you to the "Pheasant's Morning Flight?"

Bride—

No, do not play that. That is the song of one who was wifeless.

Bridegroom—

Then what do you say to "The Solitary Bird, the Widowed Swan?"

Bride—

What! Just when husband and wife have been newly married, you would sing of loneliness and widowhood?

Bridegroom—

Well, then, for want of anything else, I will play "Prince Chao's Complaint."

Bride—

Now, of all times, when we are at the height of married bliss, you would sing of grief in a palace? Oh, sir, all the beauties of summer are around us. Play me the tune "The Wind Through the Pines."

Bridegroom—

Very well. As it suits you. [*He plays.*]

Bride—

Stop, stop! You are mistaken. How is it that you play "Thoughts of Home?"

Bridegroom—

Hold a moment! I will play it again.

Bride—

Oh dear! You are wrong again. Now you are playing "The Crane's Lament."

Bridegroom—

Indeed I have again played wrongly.

Bride—

Sir, how is it that you contrive to play wrong every time? It must be that you are making fun of me on purpose.

Bridegroom—

How should I have such an intention? It is this lute string that I cannot use.

Bride—

Why cannot you use it?

Bridegroom—

I have only accustomed myself to play with the old string. This is a new one and I am not familiar with it.

Bride—

What has become of the old string?

Bridegroom—

The old string has been cast aside long since.

Bride—

Why did you cast it aside?

Bridegroom—

For no other reason than that I had the new string and had to cast aside the old one.

Bride—

But now, why not reject the new string and use the old one?

Bridegroom—

Lady, do you suppose I do not think of the old one? Only this new string I cannot cast away.

Bride—

Well, then, if you cannot cast away the new string, why think of the old one? Ah yes, I have it. Your heart is elsewhere and therefore all this idle talk.

Bridegroom—

Lady, the old chord is like to break,  
And the new chord I cannot use :  
'Tis hard the old chord again to take,  
And as hard the new chord to lose.  
I'll try once more,  
I'll try once more,  
And once more the notes I confuse.

Bride—

Sir, your heart is changed.

Bridegroom—

My heart has known no change,  
But strangely this cool day,  
As soon as one tune strikes your ear,  
'Tis changed by the wind to a different lay.

It comes out all right after all; the suffering heroine finds her way to the capital, the stern general relents and acknowledges her claims, special honors are bestowed all round by the Emperor in recognition of their several virtues, and the only drawback is that the husband has two wives instead of one on his hands, which he bears with equanimity.

Here is a rhyme we would like to give our readers from the *Western Room*. The speaker sees in a cloudy but moonlit night the

閒離香風水雲  
愁恨階埽輪斂  
萬千亂殘乍晴  
種端擁紅湧空

reflexion of his own melancholy mood. It is almost impossible to do anything but parody it in English :



The clouds enshroud in gloom the eyes of space,  
 The moon in bursts her watery circle shows,  
 The wind sweeps up the broken blossoms red,  
 Which on the steps in fragrant heaps it throws :  
 Resentful I, with thousand cares oppressed,  
 And my sad heart is thronged with myriad woes.

Here is a Chinese love song, the *Song of the Harp*, which we are told the player did not sing, but the harp seemed to say it, being played so skilfully :

使我淪亡 不得于飛 攜手相將 願言配德 慰我傍徨 何時見許 欲訴衷腸 張琴代語 不在東牆 無奈佳人 四海求凰 鳳飛翔兮 思之如狂 一日不見 見之不忘 有美一人

She is a sweet girl,  
 See her and love ;  
 One day without her  
 And mad you'll prove.

The phoenix soars far  
 Seeking his mate,  
 But my sweet fellow  
 In vain I wait.

Come, harp, speak for me  
 Tell all my heart,  
 When will she pledge me,  
 Bid fear depart ?

I must her worth tell,  
 Join hands for aye,  
 Be her companion  
 Else pine away.

Or take this very melancholy one, expressive of the loneliness after parting and offering a succession of graceful but gloomy images. The translation attempts to reproduce a peculiar duplicated use of epithets which is most common in Chinese poetry :

Drooping, drooping, the green willow, half-screened by the wall from sight ;  
 Lone, lone, the silent doorway, close-barred on clear autumn night ;  
 Sharp, sharp, far-sundered tree-tops drop their leaves before the wind ;  
 Far, far, and sad the moon peeps from the cloud's edge through the blind ;  
 Grand, grand, the bamboo shadows, writhing, move like dragons, snakes ;  
 Floats, floats, the empty vision of butterflies which " chuang tzu " makes ;  
 Clack, clack, the weaver-cricket beats incessant, wearisome ;  
 Sad, sad, the measured echo of the wash-stone's dismal drum ;  
 Dire, dire, the pain of parting, sadder than all these sad things ;  
 Burns, burns, the impatient fever, as my happy dream takes wings ;  
 Lone, lone, and cold I sigh ; tears, tears, fall tenderly,  
 For my sweetheart, where is she ?

But we must close these wanderings in the field of Chinese romance. We will do so by asking the reader to join us in the conclusion that our friend John Chinaman is a being not lacking in imaginative faculty. One cannot help respecting a nation so rich

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